

Application Serial No. 10/720,405
Amendment After Final dated January 7, 2008
Reply to Final Office Action dated October 5, 2007

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In response to the Office Action, the independent Claims 1 and 14 have been canceled and new independent Claims 20 and 21 added to the application. Furthermore, independent Claim 18 has been revised. It is believed that the rewritten/amended independent claims more clearly define over the prior art cited by the Examiner.

The subject matter of Claims 20 and 21 relates to a method and apparatus that enables a recently purchased mobile terminal such as a cell phone to have immediate access to an e-mail account by virtue of having a generic pre-configured default e-mail configuration common to all mobile terminals used with a specific network loaded into the mobile terminal. This will then allow automatic registration of a new e-mail account to users who wish to do so without the necessity for having the user or the retail establishment selling the mobile terminal to program information into the mobile terminal that is needed to open the e-mail account. The proxy server interrogates a first data base to obtain the user identification, such as the user's MSISDN, and then retrieves from a second data base access parameters, including the user name UN and password PW assigned to the user identification. The proxy sever then transmits the e-mail address, user name and password to the e-mail system to establish the e-mail account. Furthermore, on the first access request of a user identification unknown to the proxy server, the proxy server automatically creates the new e-mail account. When the proxy server interrogates the second data base it determines whether or not there is already a registered e-mail account for the presented user identification, and if not, it creates a new e-mail account in the e-mail system and stores the user specific parameters (user name and password) for that account together with the user identification (MSISDN) in the second database.

The prior art fails to disclose the claimed method and system. Koskelainen discloses that in addition to knowledge about on-going communication services there also may be other information such as various parameters and/or settings needed by the user terminal to receive those communication services. The parameters and/or settings may include specific (that is, other than default) communication network parameters. Thus, Koskelainen teaches that the mobile terminal contains parameters and/or settings including communication network parameters such as SMTP/POP3 addresses, but fails to teach a generic default e-mail

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configuration which is common to all subscribers or common to all mobile terminals of the same type. Having the generic default e-mail configuration common to all subscribers installed in the mobile terminals is what enables the mobile terminals to set up an e-mail account automatically without having to undertake specific configuration programming. The proxy server accomplishes this automatically by accessing the two databases to correlate the user identification with the user making the e-mail server access and further retrieving from the second database the user name and password for the e-mail account assigned to the MSISDN. Although Koskelainen discloses the use of a proxy server in a foreign network, Koskelainen does not teach the step of connection to a proxy server using the generic default e-mail configuration common to all mobile terminals. Koskelainen discloses that a user terminal must provide some identification to a network in order to gain access and receive communication services. However, Koskelainen does not disclose evaluating a user identification for identifying the user with an e-mail system and then setting up the connection between the user and the e-mail account in the manner set forth in Claims 20 and 21.

The secondary reference, Plank '566, discloses that a user may log in to an e-mail server using different e-mail clients. However, Plank does not teach identifying an e-mail account based on a user identification (for example, the user's MSISDN).

Note is also made of the further limitations in Claims 20 and 21 wherein when the proxy server interrogates the second database, and if there is not an e-mail account already registered therein for a particular user identification (MSISDN), that the user specific parameters for that account together with the user identification are then stored in the database.

Regarding independent Claim 18, Koskelainen and Plank do not disclose a plurality of mobile terminals that each have a generic e-mail configuration common to all of the terminals and include at least one default POP3/SMTP server address also common to all of the terminals to thereby enable a proxy server to identify and set up connections between the terminals and the e-mail system providing the e-mail accounts.

In summary, features of the invention as presently claimed include the following:

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On a first access request of a user identification unknown to the proxy server, the proxy server automatically creating a new e-mail account for the user identification.

The step of identifying a POP3/SMTP e-mail account comprising the steps of interrogating a database whether there is already a registered e-mail account for the presented user identification and, if there is no such e-mail account, creating a new e-mail account in the e-mail system and storing the user specific parameters for the e-mail account together with the corresponding user identification in the database.

The above limitations, which were previously presented in now canceled Claims 11 and 12, in the context of the method and system of Claims 20 and 21, are not disclosed by the prior art of record.

Similarly, Claim 18 is neither anticipated nor rendered obvious by the cited prior art.

For the Examiner's information, submitted herewith is a copy of the allowed claim set in the corresponding European patent EP1,422,899B1.

It is submitted that the application is now in condition for allowance. However, if the Examiner believes that further issues remain and/or has suggestions for further revision of the claims, it is requested that he telephone the undersigned at 260-460-1692.

In the event Applicants have overlooked the need for an extension of time, payment of fee, or additional payment of fee, Applicants hereby petition therefor and authorize that any charges be made to Deposit Account No. 02-0385, Baker & Daniels.

Respectfully submitted,

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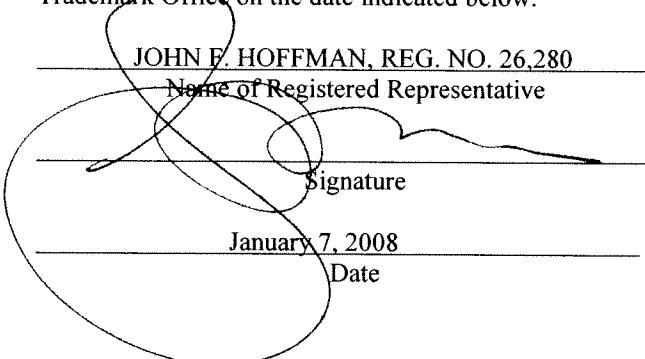
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Recurrent Access:

[0033] After registration to the e-mail system 8, the user will be identified by the proxy server 5 by his MSISDN and will be granted access to his present e-mail account either directly or by the UN/PW which are retrieved from the UN/PW database 7 under the user's MSISDN.

[0034] In general, the user is not required to have knowledge of his UN/PW, if an access to the e-mail system occurs via the mobile communication network 1 where the user can be identified by means of his MSISDN. For an access via Internet the user needs to have knowledge of the UN/PW.

[0035] If the mobile terminal 2 is pre-configured with a generic UN/PW combination the user will be auto-registered by the proxy server 5 / e-mail system 8 during his first time access, or granted access to his e-mail account, if already existent, after being identified by his MSISDN.

[0036] If the user uses a correct user specific UN/PW combination, but not the generic one, the user will be granted direct access to a specific other e-mail account 4 irrespective of the used SIM card and MSISDN.

[0037] If the user uses an invalid user specific UN/PW combination, e.g. if the user mistypes his user specific UN/PW combination, the proxy server 5 will not trigger for an auto-registration nor will give access to any e-mail account as the UN/PW combination is incorrect. The user will be prompted an error message instead indicating that the UN/PW combination is invalid.

POP3/SSL and SMTP/SSL:

[0038] The proxy server 5 can also support POP3/SSL and SMTP/SSL access, if required. The secure SSL connection must be decoded at the proxy server 5 side and re-encoded by the proxy server 5 to communicate with the e-mail system 8. If the proxy server 5 is not implemented as an integral part of the e-mail system 8 there will be no end to end security.

Deletion of Unused E-mail Accounts:

[0039] The provision of e-mail accounts has a commercial aspect since licensing is typically made on a per account and monthly basis. Since the registration for an e-mail account is facilitated to a large extent it is important to have a concept for deletion of e-mail accounts which are not used anymore in order to cut costs. After a predefined time period, e.g. one month, has elapsed without activity from the user on his e-mail account where the identification of the user has been through his MSISDN, the association of the MSISDN with the user's account can optionally be removed and the MSISDN is deleted from his profile. Subsequently, the user's account is considered to be an unused e-mail account which should be deleted after a predefined time.

Fixed Subscriber ID:

[0040] Throughout the document the use of the subscriber's MSISDN is assumed for user identification and as a default alias for the e-mail address. The problem with the MSISDN is that it is subject to the network operator's business processes. For example, after the subscriber's contract has been deleted the MSISDN will typically be reused after a certain period of time. The new subscriber with the reused MSISDN would then receive e-mails for the former subscriber. This could lead to confusion and potential data privacy issues. Similar scenarios will occur when a user changes his MSISDN within a contract.

[0041] To address this problem, a fixed subscriber-ID instead of the user's MSISDN can be used. The subscriber-ID should be unique to the subscriber, never be reused, and cover all network operator's internal business processes regarding MSISDN. The only disadvantage of this workaround is that the default alias for the e-mail address will then be a cryptic number instead of an appealing MSISDN which would be easier to remember. The user has in any case the option to chose an alias of his own, so this should not be a major disadvantage.

List of Reference Numerals and Abbreviations

[0041]

1	Mobile Communication Network
2	Mobile Terminal
3	Base Transceiver Station
4	E-mail Account
5	Proxy Server
6	Pull Interface
7	Database
8	E-mail system (account)
IMAP4	Internet Message Access Protocol 4
MSISDN	Mobile Subscriber ISDN number
OTA	Over the air
POP3	Post Office Protocol 3
PW	Password
SIM	Subscriber Identification Module
SMTP	Simple Mail Transfer Protocol
SSL	Secure Socket Layer
UN	User name
WAP	Wireless Application Protocol

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Claims

1. Method for providing access to an e-mail account of a user, in particular a POP3/SMTP e-mail account, via a mobile communication network (1), characterized in the steps of:

providing a mobile terminal (2) having a pre-con-

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figured default e-mail configuration generic to all mobile terminals used with a specific mobile communication network, the pre-configured default e-mail configuration including at least one default POP3/SMTP server address, setting up a connection to a proxy server (5) identified by the default POP3/SMTP server address via the mobile communication network (1) using a standard POP3/SMTP protocol, in the proxy server (5);

evaluating a user identification by interrogating a database (6) based on specific information assigned to the user or the mobile terminal (2), based on the user identification, identifying an e-mail account of the user provided by an e-mail system (8), retrieving access parameters, including a user name UN and a password PW assigned to the user identification, by interrogating a database (7) for accessing the identified e-mail account, and setting up a connection between the mobile terminal and the identified e-mail account of the e-mail system (8) by transmitting the e-mail address, the user name UN and the password PW to the e-mail system (8);

wherein on the first access request of a user identification unknown to the server (5), the server (5) automatically creates a new e-mail account for said user identification, and wherein the step of identifying a POP3/SMTP e-mail account comprises the steps of:

Interrogating the data base (7) whether there is already a registered e-mail account for the presented user identification, and if there is no e-mail account for the user identification, creating a new e-mail account in the e-mail system (8), storing the user specific parameters for the e-mail account together with the corresponding user identification in the database (7).

2. Method according to claim 1, characterized in that it also supports IMAP4 protocol and any Internet markup language front end when connected via a mobile communication system.
3. Method according to one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the specific information comprises an IP-address temporarily assigned to the user's MSISDN.
4. Method according to one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the user identification com-

prises an International mobile subscriber number MSISDN.

5. Method according to one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the user identification comprises an individual identification number.
6. Method according to one of the preceding claims, characterized in that an identification and authentication of the user is provided by the authentication procedures of the mobile communication network (1).
7. Method according to one of the preceding claims, characterized in that on an identification of a specific e-mail account via UN/PW, the server (5) transparently transmits the message to the addressed e-mail system/account (8).
8. Method according to one of the preceding claims, characterized in that a regular registration via any Internet markup language front end when not connected via a mobile communication system is provided by sending a challenge SMS to the MSISDN, the challenge SMS containing a password which then has to be entered at the front end for validation purposes for the registration of a e-mail account.
9. System for providing access to a e-mail account of a user, in particular a POP3/SMTP e-mail account, via a mobile communication network (1), characterized in:

a mobile terminal (2) having a pre-configured default e-mail configuration generic to all mobile terminals used with a specific mobile communication network, the pre-configured default e-mail configuration including at least one default POP3/SMTP server address,

a proxy server (5) connected to the mobile communication network (1) to which the default POP3/SMTP server address is assigned,

means for evaluating a user identification by interrogating a database (6) based on specific information assigned to the user or the mobile terminal (2),

means for identifying an e-mail account assigned to the user identification,

means for retrieving access parameters, including a user name UN and a password PW assigned to the user identification, by interrogating a database (7) for accessing the identified e-mail account,

means for setting up a connection between the mobile terminal and the identified e-mail account of the e-mail system (8) by transmitting the e-mail address, the user name UN and the password PW to the e-mail system (8),

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an e-mail system (8) comprising the identified e-mail account means in the server (5) for automatically creating a new e-mail account for said user identification on the first access request of a user identification unknown to the server (5), and means for interrogating the data base (7) whether there is already a registered e-mail account for the presented user identification, and means for storing the user specific parameters for the e-mail account together with the corresponding user identification in the database (7), if there is no e-mail account for the user identification and a new e-mail account in the e-mail system (8) has been created.

10. System according to claim 9, characterized in that the server (5) is part of the e-mail system (8).

11. System according to claim 9, characterized in that the server (5) is part of the mobile communication network (1).

12. System according to claim 9, characterized in that the server (5) is a standalone system.

13. Mobile terminal for use in the system of preceding claim 9, for providing access to an e-mail account of a user, in particular a POP3/SMTP e-mail account, via a mobile communication network (1), characterized in that it comprises a pre-configured default e-mail configuration generic to all mobile terminals used with a specific mobile communication network and including at least one default POP3/SMTP server address which addresses a proxy server (5) used for identifying the e-mail account and setting up a connection between the mobile terminal (2) and an e-mail system (8) providing the e-mail account, wherein the e-mail configuration includes a default user name UN and password PW.

Patentansprüche

1. Ein Verfahren für den Zugriff auf ein E-Mail-Konto eines Nutzers über ein mobiles Kommunikationsnetzwerk (1), insbesondere ein POP3/SMTP-E-Mail-Konto, das durch die Schritte: Bereitstellung eines mobilen Endgeräts (2), das eine vorkonfigurierte E-Mail-Standardkonfiguration aufweist, die für alle mobilen Endgeräte, die bei einem spezifischen mobilen Kommunikationsnetzwerk verwendet werden, typisch ist, wobei die vorkonfigurierte E-Mail-Standardkonfiguration zumindest eine Standard-POP3/SMTP-Server-Adresse beinhaltet; Einrichtung einer Verbindung zu einem Ersatz-Server (proxy server) (5), der durch die Standard-POP3/SMTP-Server-Adresse über das mobile Kom-
5 munikationsnetzwerk unter Verwendung eines Standard-POP3/SMTP-Protokolls identifiziert wurde; Auswertung einer Nutzeridentifizierung durch Abfrage einer Datenbank (6) basierend auf besonderen Informationen, die dem Nutzer oder dem mobilen Endgerät (2) basierend auf der Nutzeridentifizierung zugeordnet wurden, die ein E-Mail-Konto des Nutzer identifiziert, das von einem E-Mail-System (8) bereitgestellt wurde; Wiedergewinnung der Zugriffsparameter, die einen Nutzernamen UN und ein Passwort PW beinhalten, die der Nutzeridentifizierung durch Abfrage eines Datenbank (7) für den Zugriff auf das identifizierte E-Mail-Konto zugeordnet wurden, und Einrichtung einer Verbindung zwischen dem mobilen Endgerät und dem identifizierten E-Mail-Konto des E-Mail-Systems (8) durch Übermittlung der E-Mail-Adresse, des Nutzernamens UN und des Passworts PW an das E-Mail-System (8) gekennzeichnet ist, wobei bei der ersten Zugriffsanfrage einer Nutzeridentifizierung, die dem Server (5) unbekannt ist, der Server (5) für die besagte Nutzeridentifizierung automatisch ein neues E-Mail-Konto einrichtet, und wobei der Schritt des Identifizierens eines POP3/SMTP-E-Mail-Kontos die Schritte Abfrage der Datenbank (7), ob es für die vorgelegte Nutzeridentifizierung bereits ein registriertes E-Mail-Konto und ob es für die Nutzeridentifizierung kein E-Mail-Konto gibt, Einrichtung eines neuen E-Mail-Kontos im E-Mail-System (8), Speicherung der nutzerspezifischen Parameter für das E-Mail-Konto zusammen mit der entsprechenden Nutzeridentifizierung in der Datenbank (7) beinhaltet.
2. Ein Verfahren gemäß Anspruch 1, dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass es ebenfalls das IMAP4-Protokoll und irgendein Internet-Markup-Language-Front-End unterstützt, wenn eine Verbindung über ein mobiles Kommunikationssystem besteht.
3. Ein Verfahren gemäß einem der vorangehenden Ansprüche, dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass die spezifischen Informationen eine IP-Adresse beinhalten, die vorübergehend der MSISDN des Nutzers zugeordnet ist.
4. Ein Verfahren gemäß einem der vorangehenden Ansprüche, dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass die Nutzeridentifizierung eine internationale mobile Teilnehmernummer MSISDN beinhaltet.
5. Ein Verfahren gemäß einem der vorangehenden Ansprüche, dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass die Nutzeridentifizierung eine individuelle Identifizierungsnummer beinhaltet.
6. Ein Verfahren gemäß einem der vorangehenden Ansprüche, dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass eine